

ABSTRACT

The relationships among counseling expectations, attitudes toward seeking psychological help, psychological distress, and intention to seek counseling have only been examined in one previous study (Vogel, Wester, Wei, & Boysen, 2005). The primary purpose of the current study was to replicate and address the limitations of the Vogel et al. (2005) study. First, a mediation analysis of attitudes on the relationship of expectations and intention to seek therapy was performed. Next, path analyses were used to test a model of the relationship among counseling expectations, attitudes toward seeking psychological help, psychological distress, and the intent to seek counseling, for men and women separately. In the hypothesized model, two separate paths were predicted to impact intentions to seek psychological help. First, three distinct expectations about counseling (personal commitment, facilitative conditions, and counselor expertise) were expected to influence attitudes toward seeking psychological help, which in turn, predicted intention to seek counseling. Second, psychological distress was expected to relate to the intent to seek therapy. Because the hypothesized model for both genders did not fit the data, exploratory path analyses were completed. In the final path model for men, additional paths from the expectancy factors personal commitment and counselor expertise to intent to seek therapy resulted in a well-fitting model. For women, an additional path between psychological distress and attitudes improved the model significantly. Impact of these findings for research and practice are discussed.